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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8031st meeting
Thursday, 24 August 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Lundkvist
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695)

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/715)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695)

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/715)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Guinea-Bissau and Togo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Modibo Touré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/695, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and document S/2017/715, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

At this meeting, the security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Touré, Ambassador Vieira and Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Touré.

Mr. Touré (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Egypt on its successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of August.

It is indeed my honour to introduce the most recent report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) (S/2017/695). I would like to provide my analysis of the most recent developments in the process to resolve the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, the immediate steps to be taken, as well as the role that the member States of UNOGBIS should continue to play in order to ensure long-term stability and realize the country's full economic and social development potential.

In that regard, I would like to underscore that the Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) road map remain the keys to resolving the current crisis and to helping Guinea-Bissau address the structural causes of its political instability and the recurring institutional deadlocks the country has faced since its independence. The implementation of the Agreement and the road map will require political will from within Guinea-Bissau, as well as long-term commitment from the international community.

(*spoke in English*)

The political situation in Guinea-Bissau has evolved since my last briefing to the Security Council in February (see S/PV.7883). Three months ago, tensions had reached a new peak, leading the Guinea-Bissau base group of international partners to publicly express, on 26 May, its concern about increasing inflammatory rhetoric and the threats of violence through demonstration, and to reiterate the calls for restraint made by ECOWAS and the Security Council, among others. By contrast, in recent weeks the tone of media coverage in the country has quietened down and dialogue aimed at resolving the political impasse within the framework of the Conakry Agreement has resumed between the parties to the crisis.

In July, for the first time since the start of the crisis in 2015, bilateral discussions took place among the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the People's National Assembly and leaders of the main political parties. I congratulate Bissau-Guinean political actors for that positive development. I must also acknowledge the continued efforts of the international community to convey the need for urgency

in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the commitment of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS to maintain their focus and engagement on the crisis, and their determination to impose, if need be, targeted sanctions on those who obstruct the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, as well as the intense facilitation efforts led by the group of women facilitators with advisory, technical and operational support from UNOGBIS.

Next month, the three-month extension by ECOWAS of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) to enable political actors to fully implement the Conakry Agreement will expire. The resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau, in the framework of the Conakry Agreement, requires our continued engagement and support. As I brief the Council today, I believe that essential conditions exist for the implementation of the Agreement. To capitalize on recent positive developments and on considerable concerted international efforts, I call upon the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of States and Government and on the Security Council to jointly urge the President of the Republic to abide by his commitment to implement the Conakry Agreement within the time frame provided by ECOWAS; urge the leadership of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the remaining members of the group of 15 parliamentarians expelled from the PAIGC to complete their effective reintegration into the party; and encourage the leadership of the PAIGC and the leadership of the Party for Social Renewal, as well the three other parties represented in Parliament, to reach an agreement on a stability pact to ensure the stability of the inclusive Government.

As we enter a sensitive electoral period, with the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2018 and 2019, respectively, requisite measures must be taken to establish an environment conducive to the holding of free, peaceful and credible polls. I therefore urge Member States to consider ways to financially support the continued presence of ECOMIB through the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the completion of the next electoral cycle.

Recent positive developments include the continuation of processes involving national reconciliation with the support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS); combating drug trafficking and serious organized crime, with joint support from UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; as well as mainstreaming the issues of women's human rights and gender equality. Progress on the implementation of reform of the security sector has been slow, although the process has seen some positive developments, including the recent endorsement of an ambitious three-year joint programme on police, justice and corrections, which focuses on building the capacities of national law enforcement agencies and strengthening the capacities of the national justice system. I have called on the members of the Peacebuilding Commission to kindly support resource mobilization efforts to ensure the timely implementation of that programme

On the economic front, economic growth is forecast to reach 5.2 per cent owing to another robust cashew harvest in the context of favourable international market prices. According to the International Monetary Fund, the country has made notable progress in improving the macroeconomic framework and the management of public expenditures.

(*spoke in French*)

The long-term and concerted commitment of ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations remains crucial in supporting the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. Only by meeting the minimum requirements of the Agreement will the country be able to move forward in the reform process, organize credible and peaceful elections, channel national resources and mobilize the necessary international assistance to support its socioeconomic development for the well-being of its people. I encourage ECOWAS to carry out an assessment of the implementation of the Conakry Agreement as soon as possible through its high-level ministerial committeee, in accordance with the most recent decision taken at the fifty-first ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government . That will allow the Authority to take stock of the challenges that remain and to recommend the appropriate measures to be taken.

I also encourage the ECOWAS Heads of State to organize a meeting on Guinea-Bissau on the sidelines of the upcoming session of the General Assembly. Moreover, the realization of the visit envisaged by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in Bissau during this year, with a view to monitoring the implementation of the decisions of the African Union

and ECOWAS, would be an important contribution to maintaining the commitment of the international community alongside Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, in so much as possible, it would be desirable for such a visit to be made in conjunction with the Security Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere thanks to the Council for the unflagging interest that it has taken in the development of the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as evidenced by the meetings and press statements on the subject. It is important that the Council maintain its commitment. In that regard, a special session of consultations could be devoted to Guinea-Bissau on the sidelines of the upcoming General Assembly session so as to agree on the next steps to be taken so as to ensure the resolution of the crisis.

I congratulate ECOWAS and its new Chair, President Faure Gnassingbé of Togo, and the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, President Alpha Condé of Guinea, for their tireless commitment to seeking stability in that country and for their mediation efforts. My thanks also go to all regional and international partners, including the African Union, the CPLP and the European Union, with whom UNIOGBIS will continue to work closely so as to help the country stay the course towards sustainable stability and prosperity, which are the hallmarks of peace and regional and international stability.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*) I thank Mr. Touré for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vieira.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil):I would like to thank you, Sir, for the invitation extended to me in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In that capacity, I conducted a visit to Bissau and Lisbon, from 25 to 28 July, to obtain first-hand accounts concerning efforts to end the ongoing political impasse.

During the visit, I was able to consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court and a number of Ministers and members of all political parties represented in the National Assembly. I also held meetings with the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, the National Election Commission and representatives of the international community, including the United Nations. Moreover, I took part in meetings with representatives of Guinea-Bissau civil society.

In Lisbon on 28 July, I met the Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), Ms. Maria do Carmo Silveira, at which time we discussed the role of the Community in supporting Guinea-Bissau and in helping find a solution to the political situation. As members of the Council know, Brazil is currently the Chair of the CPLP. It is our firm belief that those increased synergies and complementarities among the relevant international partners have been beneficial for an effective peacebuilding endeavour in Guinea-Bissau.

My consultations served to highlight the complexity of Guinea-Bissau's political impasse. The Conakry Agreement, signed in October 2016, remains a fundamental point of reference for most political actors, although it continues to be the subject of conflicting interpretations. The meetings that I held made it clear that there are two distinct narratives on what was reached in Conakry. For one group there was no agreement on who should have been appointed Prime Minister; others, however, believed that one name was in fact agreed during the negotiations.

Some interlocutors noted that the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) no longer controlled the National Popular Assembly, while others underlined that the 2014 elections gave the majority to the PAIGC and that this could not be changed through the establishment of a block of 15 dissident parliamentarians. I did not find that those differing positions were moving closer together.

Most stakeholders consulted were supportive of the efforts of the women's facilitation group, aimed at facilitating dialogue among key actors so as to overcome the political impasse, while noting that it had been effective as a confidence-building measure and that it had positive effects in de-escalating tensions. It was also instrumental for opening up lines of communication among some actors who had not spoken to one another directly for more than one year.

The group is composed of 10 women from different local organizations. When I was in Bissau, the process had already gone through one round of bilateral meetings between the President and key actors, and my visit coincided with a second round of discussions, on 27 and 28 July. It was decided that during this facilitation process no declarations should be made to

the press. The actors initially involved in the dialogue were the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the President of the Supreme Court and the Presidents of the PAIGC, the Party of the Social Renovation and the group of 15 dissident parliamentarians of the PAICG. The other three political parties with representation in the National Assembly were also invited to the second round of meetings.

In my meeting with President José Mário Vaz, he was very supportive of this process and affirmed he would wait for a report of the group before making any decision on next steps. According to the report issued on 2 August, the facilitation has contributed to fewer incidents of violence, a de-escalation of tensions and the fostering of dialogue in order to reach a consensual solution and implement the Conakry Agreement.

I also had an opportunity to be in contact with two other initiatives from local civil society. A network of youth organizations presented to me their view that there had been little effort in having the youth population involved in decisions on policy. Additionally, I was briefed by the Organizing Committee of the National Conference, which hopes to identify a model of national reconciliation to be considered at a national conference to be held in early 2018.

The National Electoral Commission (CNE) informed me that it had already finalized a timeline for holding legislative elections in May 2018, which must now be approved by the President of the Republic. It noted that prior to the elections, it was necessary for the CNE to update the voter-registration lists. That process should happen between January and March 2018. There are currently 775,500 registered voters, and the number is expected to increase. In the CNE's view, the elections could be held within the foreseen framework, provided that the needed resources are obtained.

One point that some interlocutors expressed to me was that the CNE President's mandate had already ended and that the position was currently being occupied ad interim. They informed me that the appointment of a new Commission had to be approved by the National People's Assembly, which would be difficult in view of the paralysis in the Parliament.

Sufficient time must be allowed for technical preparations, including the update of the voter-registration lists. However, many believe that elections alone cannot solve the impasse without a political solution to the crisis. Finally, it is important to note that some stakeholders requested that the United Nations follow and support the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau.

The leadership of the armed forces again provided assurances of their strict respect for the constitutional order. A request was made for cooperation to train and modernize the armed forces and to resume their participation in international peace operations. Concern was expressed regarding the fact that there had been no progress in the implementation of plans for the creation of a pension fund for the military.

Several interlocutors expressed concern about the possible negative effect of an eventual departure of the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB). Some of my interlocutors also called for sanctions to be imposed on civilians, in particular on politicians, for not implementing the Conakry Agreement. On the other hand, other stakeholders expressed their strong opposition to that idea, seeing it as interference in the country's internal politics.

With regard to the police force, a request was made to develop capacity. The importance of countering international crime, enhancing border controls and maritime security and supporting the expansion of community policing were underlined.

With respect to public demonstrations, it was noted that, following confrontations between the police and demonstrators in April, the situation had become calmer. However, some interlocutors raised the issue that public demonstrations had been restricted. Many stakeholders noted that little progress had been made with regard to the prevailing climate of impunity.

Several interlocutors noted that the economy was doing well. The gross domestic product is expected to grow at around 5 per cent in 2017. The Government remains the largest employer in the country. The President underlined to me the importance of making Guinea-Bissau food sufficient. However, other actors noted that many people continued to struggle, with the lack of health and education services. Interlocutors also noted that in 2015 the Brussels Round Table had pledged $1.5 billion in support of the Terra Ranka programme. They stressed the importance that donors fulfil their pledges. However, it should be underlined that a solution to the current crisis would enable the international community to fulfil its commitments.

It will also provide the country with stability and contribute to its development, benefiting the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to make the following final remarks, which have also been endorsed by CPLP. I would conclude my statement by reaffirming that the PBC will continue to make every effort to support the country. I reiterate the PBC's backing for the various efforts made by international and regional stakeholders aimed at assisting the Bissau-Guineans to end the political stalemate. I urge all key political actors to engage in a national dialogue with a view to implementing the Bissau six-point road map and the Conakry Agreement. I also welcome the political consultations that have taken place with the support of the group of Wwmen facilitators. I underline the importance of holding elections in the country with the necessary preparations, in particular the update of the voter-registration lists. I congratulate the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau for respecting the Constitution. I recognize the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States in the mediation of the crisis as well as the important role being played by ECOMIB.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Vieira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Rosselli.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), on Guinea-Bissau, I have the honour of briefing the members of the Council on the visit that I conducted to Guinea-Bissau from 13 to 15 June of this year.

The purpose of the visit was to collect first-hand information on the effective implementation of the sanctions imposed under resolution 2048 (2012) and assess the political developments in Guinea-Bissau. I was accompanied by the Political Coordinator of Senegal and the Secretary of the Committee, who took part in all the meetings we had in Bissau.

In the five years since sanctions were adopted, this was the first time that a Chair of the Committee visited the country. Accordingly, I had the impression that the political actors and civil society were interested in engaging in dialogue and presenting their views to the Committee. That is why I believe that it is essential to have greater dialogue between the Committee — and the Council — and the citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

I was happy that I was able to get to know all the interlocutors that were included in the mandate issued by the Committee and to have been able hold fruitful discussions with them. During our conversations, I stressed the importance of pursuing dialogue and collaboration with the various interested parties — national and international — with a view to resolving the political crisis andfinding a lasting solution. I also stressed that the international community continued to support Guinea-Bissau but that it was necessary to take concrete measures to create a stable political environment and to receive the pledged funds in Brussels in March 2015. I further highlighted that the situation in Guinea-Bissau remained of great importance to the Security Council.

While the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains stable overall, uncertainty over the resolution of the current political crisis could easily undermine the calm in the country. Thus far, the constitutional order does not seem to be directly challenged, but the ambiguity in the division of powers between the President and the Prime Minister continues to foment political strife. In addition, uncertainty in the political environment has eroded the confidence of donors and investors, as the root causes of instability in Guinea-Bissau remain unresolved. International and regional efforts to find a durable solution to the political crisis appear to have no effect on the ground, since none of the provisions of the Conakry Agreement have yet been implemented, mainly due to a lack of political will.

The country continues to be affected by the uncertainty of the political situation without any clear signs of substantive progress towards a solution in the near future. However, thus far, the security situation has remained stable without episodes of violence — the army has not interfered in political controversies; human rights, in general, seem to be respected; and constitutional order is not directly challenged. I think it is important to emphasize that the current situation might not be sustainable for much longer and that the patience of the military and the population could end at any time. That is why it is urgent to find a political solution to the crisis.

Many interlocutors pointed out that the political crisis was generally perceived to have been caused by the lack of political will to arrive at a solution and was based on personal interests and ambitions rather than different religious, ideological, ethnic or philosophical considerations. In that regard, while all political actors

expressed their readiness to engage in dialogue and find a solution to the political crisis, they each blamed some group or person for the stagnation. That shows an uncompromising attitude, whereas what is needed are specific concessions.

Almost all the interlocutors pointed out that since 2012 the military had respected the constitutional order and the laws of the country, including refraining from interfering in the political life of Guinea-Bissau. Many speakers believe that it would be appropriate to remove persons from the sanctions list on the basis of their commendable conduct. It should be noted that the persons who are subject to sanctions continue to serve in the the army and some have been promoted to higher ranks, which has contributed to the feeling, within a segment of the population, that there is a climate of impunity.

The general feeling among most interlocutors was that sanctions remained effective as a deterrent to possible disruptive elements, both military and civilian. However, while the sanctions were considered to be effective, many pointed out that the measures did not appropriately target those who merited sanctions and called, in turn, for sanctions against civilians, particularly politicians. Those who were not part of the Government indicated clearly that the responsibility for the political crisis lay with the political class, political parties and, in general, civilians driven by personal interests rather than the interests of the entire country.

Since last year, two designated persons have travelled outside of Guinea-Bissau. However, they were detained at the destination airport and repatriated to Guinea-Bissau. No other report has indicated that other persons have violated the travel ban. That is a positive sign that Member States are increasingly vigilant and are striving to implement sanctions. There is still some confusion as to the scope of the restriction on the travel ban. In that regard, I made sure to explain the procedures to the authorities during the visit and also provided them with a copy of the guidelines for carrying out the work of the Committee.

In a number of meetings, many emphasized the positive role played by the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in helping to prevent the constitutional order from being challenged, although it is clear that the role of ECOMIB is very symbolic and that, in the event of large-scale armed intervention by military forces, the Mission would be ill-equipped to match it due to its limited capacity.

The visit reflects the positive momentum of the cooperation between the Committee and the Government, which should be maintained and increased. I submitted a report to the Committee on 17 July and made recommendations. In particular, I focused on the need to review the list of sanctions, taking into account the current situation and developments in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the views expressed by those I spoke with during my visit. I also believe that we should exercise caution during the review process.

I would like to thank the authorities of Guinea-Bissau for their warm welcome and the fruitful meetings. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau for the excellent support provided during the visit.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Rosselli for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

I would first like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, as well as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, for their briefings today.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau has improved as compared to that of five years ago and, in that regard, the international community has made tireless efforts to consolidate constitutional order in the country. However, Guinea-Bissau has been undergoing a political crisis over the past two years and, although the situation remains stable in general, the uncertainty surrounding a possible resolution of the crisis threatens to undermine the calm in the country.

Let me point out that the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau is not based on ideological, partisan, religious or ethnic differences. Rather, it results from, and is fuelled by, the personal differences of some of its main political leaders. If we continue along that path, we will find ourselves only one step away from undermining all the efforts made to date. That is not because the

international community has left Guinea-Bissau to its own devices. On the contrary, the United Nations, the countries of the region and other international partners have provided Guinea-Bissau with all the necessary tools to become a success story. But those efforts will continue to be in vain if its political leaders do not do their part.

Today we are facing a political crisis with domestic roots, where the political class seems to ignore the support initiatives of the international community. The last and most important effort to resolve this crisis is the six-point road map and, within it, the Conakry Agreement. Uruguay urges that the provisions contained in the Agreement be implemented without further delay in order to find a solution to a crisis that primarily harms the civilian population of Guinea-Bissau. We commend ongoing efforts towards dialogue, which undoubtedly contribute to resolving the situation and to encouraging the participation of women in political decisions. However, we reiterate that tangible results will not be achieved until leaders take concrete steps to implement the Conakry Agreement.

The worrying information contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/695) concerning various restrictions on the freedom of expression is noteworthy. We encourage the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to ensure that fundamental freedoms are respected, promoted and protected for all of the country's inhabitants.

In connection with the sanctions imposed under resolution 2048 (2012), allow me to offer some observations in my capacity as the representative of Uruguay, on the basis of the information I obtained at first hand during my visit to the country from 13 to 15 June, during which I met with the highest-ranking Government authorities, politicians and civil society groups. We believe that the penalties applied to certain high-ranked military officials in Guinea-Bissau have been a fitting and useful tool that has played an important role in the consolidation of the democratic order in the country, and we welcome the commitment and action of the international community in that respect.

My interlocutors were almost unanimous in their view that, to date, the members of the military subject to sanctions have conducted themselves in a praiseworthy manner and have refrained from interfering in national politics. The individuals listed on the sanctions list in accordance with resolution 2048 (2012) are not responsible for the political impasse that reigns in Guinea-Bissau today. The sanctions regime as well as the list of individuals subject to sanctions pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) have remained the same since their establishment, although the circumstances certainly have changed. The Security Council should initiate a frank, critical and constructive review on this matter, including the definition of criteria for an eventual removal of names from the list of individuals subject to sanctions.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia welcomes the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Mr. Modibo Touré. We are also grateful for the briefings by Ambassadors Elbio Rosselli and Mauro Vieira in their respective capacities as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), on Guinea-Bissau, and of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. We also welcome the presence of the Ambassador of Togo, representing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and of the Ambassador of Guinea-Bissau.

Bolivia is following closely the situation of political and social instability in Guinea-Bissau, and we take note of the relative calm in the country. It is clear that the current context is the result of stagnation in the implementation of the agreements reached by the parties to the conflict, notably the Conakry Agreement of October 2016, which is ultimately the fundamental framework for a peaceful settlement of the crisis and the pursuit of lasting and sustainable peace.

We are also concerned by the consequences of the political and social instability on crucial State institutions, as noted by ECOWAS following its high-level ministerial visit in April.

In that context, we again commend the active participation of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations, through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNIOGBIS, and their continued efforts to bring about rapprochement between the parties in conflict and to provide assistance in the security sector and in the political field with a view to encouraging an inclusive Government.

We also encourage and highlight the initiative of the women's forum for peace. The efforts of women

in Guinea-Bissau in the pursuit of a political solution demonstrate that the gender perspective and the participation of women in mediation and dialogue at all levels is fundamental.

Bolivia rejects any action that may destabilize or jeopardize the continuity of any process of dialogue and reconciliation established with the participation of all the parties involved. We call upon the parties to definitively consolidate agreements in line with the inclusive national dialogue, which will enable members of all sectors of civil society, Government and political parties represented in the National Assembly to reach consensus in order to give effect to those agreements in a constructive manner. We call for a legitimate commitment to a lasting political solution owned, led and determined by Guinea-Bissau, for the sole benefit of its people and in strict respect for that country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

On the subject of sanctions, Bolivia welcomes the work of Uruguay's Ambassador Rosselli in his capacity as Chair of the 2048 Sanctions Committee. As he himself stated, his was the first visit to Guinea-Bissau since the establishment of the Committee five years ago. The visit allows us to have information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the sanctions. It is necessary to emphasize how important it is that the Security Council — and its subsidiary bodies in particular, especialy the sanctions committees — maintain coordination with local authorities. In that regard, the visit of Ambassador Rosselli is worth highlighting and commending. We reiterate that sanctions should not be an end in themselves. Moreover, it is necessary to carry out periodic evaluations of sanctions in order to analyse their effectiveness and to be able to make modifications where necessary. In this case, the conclusions of the visit of the Ambassador Rosselli should guide our future steps.

Along the same lines, Bolivia reiterates its categorical rejection of the application of unilateral sanctions. They constitute a flagrant violation of multilateralism and a serious threat to the international order, as they are illegal measures that extend the jurisdiction and the internal legislation of one State over another, thereby violating the principles of equality, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States.

Finally, we urge all donor countries and agencies to continue to fulfil their commitments by contributing and combining efforts that are conducive to the definitive resolution of the conflict. In times of political, institutional and social crisis, ensuring the well-being of the population, in particular the most vulnerable segments, must and should be the overriding interest that determines the path towards lasting stability in Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mrs. Pinto Lopes d'Alva (Guinea-Bissau): I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting my delegation to the Security Council table. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and Egypt on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of August and to wish you successful deliberations.

Allow me to exted to you, Sir, and to all Council members the greetings of His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, on behalf of Bissau-Guineans, with special thanks to the Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for the report on the situation in Guinea-Bissa (S/2017/695) presented by his Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Modibo Touré. The continued support of the United Nations to our country through the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the entire United Nations country team on the ground, working together with Bissau-Guineans for sustainable peace and development, is very much appreciated.

The commitment of the United Nations to Guinea-Bissau is undoubtedly extensive and diversified. It touches almost all sectors of our political and institutional life, from defence and security to health, education, culture, the promotion of women, human rights, the fight against transnational organized crime, social communication for national reconciliation and constitutional order and peacebuilding — as is clearly detailed in the report. For all that support, we cannot but express our boundless gratitude and recognition of the commitment of the United Nations to our country. We hope that the engagement of the United Nations will continue to lead us to much-needed peace so that, together with our bilateral and other multilateral partners, we can finally engage in new partnerships for the development of Guinea-Bissau.

Permit me also to thank His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Chair of Guinea-Bissau configuration

of the Peacebuilding Commission and Chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), for his statements in those two capacities.

The engagement of the Commission, demonstrated by the recent visit of the configuration to Guinea-Bissau, where Ambassador Vieira had a chance to meet personally with the main political stakeholders and civil society, served to reassure our people that the international community is still standing with them on many fronts, through the United Nations, in their quest for the consolidation of peace.

As Chair of the CPLP, Ambassador Vieira's stop in Lisbon, with a peace message on Guinea-Bissau, once again reassures us that our group of nine Portuguese-speaking countries, which share not only a language but also a culture and history as well, also has an important role to play in fostering dialogue and long-lasting peace in our country.

We would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations and Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, for his statement and for the report on his recent visit to our country, where he also met with all the relevant political actors. We believe that visit enabled him to better assess the present sanctions on Guinea- Bissau.

The diligent efforts of our subregion and of the African Union to achieve peace in Guinea-Bissau have been important. We thank His Excellency Ambassador Kokou Kpayedo, Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations and present Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for his diligence and for his statement to the Security Council.

We are aware that we bear the ultimate responsibility for resolving the crisis in our country. We understand the concern expressed in the report about the evolution of the political situation and the final observations, which focus on the political and institutional impasse that, unfortunately, we are still not able to overcome. In general, the analyses that were done do not reflect a lack of objectivity.

Without intending to comment on the analysis and conclusions of the report, allow me to express our appreciation for the patience and the wisdom that has characterized United Nations interventions and the actions of ECOWAS and African Union on the front lines of the process to resolve the situation in Guinea-Bissau. Such patience and wisdom will assist in finding the sustainable solution that we all seek, with the support of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations. Such a solution will require a strong and irreplaceable internal commitment from State institutions and political parties. That point is very well reflected in the report and we cannot agree more that, indeed, Bissau-Guineans will have to work harder to make that commitment.

From the outside looking in, it seems that politics has come to an end in Guinea-Bissau. However, the truth is that our institutions, as strategic political actors, are seeking answers and finding solutions that are adequate and sustainable. The recent initiative by the group of women facilitators of dialogue, which was deservedly embraced by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and gained immediate visibility, was the result of efforts made at many levels, but always away from the media spotlight. We thank those courageous women for their important work. In Guinea-Bissau, since our struggle for independence, women have always been involved in every aspect of our political life and there are no better messengers of peace than women.

One of the most significant things that should be pointed out is the fact that the institutional crisis remains somehow circumscribed in the ambit of political institutions, Parliament and Government. In reality, we could say that it is a political party crisis, which has disarticulated the functional relationship between the National Assembly and the Government.

There is a need for broader dialogue, in particular within political parties, which is the recognized path that must be taken to generate consensus, make commitments, dissolve internal political tensions and break the persistent political-institutional impasse that has become entrenched in our political order. It is the path outlined by the report of Secretary-General, and it is the path that President Vaz has always called for. Despite the institutional crises, Guinea-Bissau lives in peace and there have been no disturbances for the past five years.

We can state that there have been no human rights violations in Guinea-Bissau worthy of report in recent years. The everyday life of civil servants has become increasingly normal, as salaries are now paid early and regularly, like never before seen in Guinea-Bissau.

Political tension, which is normal in a democracy, has nevertheless been reduced and is almost insignificant. We therefore do not agree with the sanctions because they seem excessive and counterproductive in the light of Guinea-Bissau's pol: ical context.

In conclusion, we have faith that Guinea-Bissau will overcome its institutional crises. With the Council's continued support, solidarity and patience, we will consolidate our democracy by working out our differences, achieve long-lasting peace and lead our nation to the path of development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Togo.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Sir, for inviting us to today's meeting. We also thank you for steering the work of the Security Council this month.

Like those who spoke before me, I would like to commend today's briefing of the very detailed report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2017/695). Its relevant findings are an exceilent description of the situation on the ground and reflect the willingness of international community, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to help Guinea-Bissau to resolve the crisis by peaceful means — an inclusive and sincere political dialogue and appropriate reforms.

Driven by a deep concern about the stalemate in the process aimed at resolving Guinea-Bissau's political and institutional crisis, which has lasted for more than two years, despite the fact that stakeholders have signed the Conakry Agreement on 14 October 2016 in order to find a sustainable solution to the crisis in the country, the fifty-first ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Monrovia on 4 June, called upon all political actors to take all the necessary, immediate measures to ensure the smooth functioning of Guinea-Bissau's State institutions, in the interests of the population. To that end, the summit requested that the international community and development partners honour their pledges and commitments.

Following the assessment of the situation delivered by the high-level ministerial committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Conakry Agreement after its visit to the country on 23 and 24 April, the summit took note of the promises made by stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. It called upon all actors concerned to strictly adhere to the terms of the Agreement. In the light of all that I have mentioned and given the political stalemate, which is a detriment to stability and social peace, the Monrovia summit reaffirmed the primacy of the Conakry Agreement as the only credible basis on which to resolve the crisis.

For its part, and to demonstrate its commitment and good will, ECOWAS decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau by an additional three months. Its withdrawal had initially been scheduled for 30 June in order to maintain the calm required to enable all Bissau-Guinean political actors and stakeholders to implement the Agreement.

Unfortunately, two months following the extension of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, motivated by the request of the President of Guinean-Bissau, Mr. José Mário Vaz, to give a chance to the success of the initiative of a group of women who have been committed to facilitating the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, no significant progress has been made with regard to the conflicting issues fuelling the crisis. The latter include, inter alia, the appointment of a Prime Minister by consensus during the interim period leading up to the 2018 legislative elections, the formation of an inclusive Government and the reintegration of the 15 members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde.

Lastly, with a view to ensuring a rapid and lasting exit from the crisis and after commending the neutrality observed thus far by the Guinea-Bissau army, ECOWAS has affirmed its steadfast determination to implement, if necessary, sanctions targeted against all those who would impede the proper implementation of the Conakry Agreement — the first step in the implementation of the ECOWAS six-point road map signed in Bissau on 10 September 2016.

At its fifty-first ordinary session held in Monrovia on 4 June, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government elected the President of the Republic of Togo, His Excellency Mr. President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, as Chair of the of the subregional Authority. The new Chair immediately and urgently appealed to the parties to the conflict to exercise

restraint and responsibility so as to ensure every chance of a negotiated and durable exit from the crisis. He also held meetings on 16 June in Lomé with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General concerning short-term prospects and modalities of support to ensure the success of the ECOWAS mediation process.

In relying on the Conakry Agreement, he believes that Guinea-Bissau is at a decisive turning point regarding its future and that henceforth it is now up to all stakeholders, on the one hand, to accelerate the pace of normalization by settling all the ongoing disputes and, on the other hand, to concentrate the vital forces of the nation on the tasks of recovery and economic development so as to meet the immense expectations of its youth and general population.

Moreover, he did not fail to warn of the dangers of the persistence of the crisis in a region of West Africa that is facing an increasing number of new dangers, first and foremost among which are terrorism and transnational organized crime, which are fuelled, to a large extent, by chronic political instability, poverty and the social disarray they engender.

Finally, I would like to convey the gratitude of the ECOWAS senior leaders to the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries for their unyielding and continued confidence in and support for the mediation efforts of ECOWAS.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.